

I advocate eliminating the requirement to receive or send Morse code in order to obtain any grade of amateur radio license. However, I also advocate leaving the present Morse code frequency allocations in place so amateur operators who wish to use Morse code can continue to do so.

In summary, I propose

- 1) dropping the Morse code license requirement entirely
- 2) immediately giving Tech Plus privileges, ie, phone on 10 meters, to Techs
- 3) retaining the current Morse code allocations on the HF amateur bands so the amateurs that like to use Morse code can continue to do so
- 4) requiring a General or Amateur Extra license for most phone privileges
- 5) retaining the existing phone band plans for General, Advanced, and Amateur Extra licenses to encourage Generals and Advanceds to upgrade to Amateur Extra in order to obtain the privilege of using a larger portion of the band.

My reasoning is described below.

A long time ago, Morse code was the only way to communicate by radio. The amateur radio operators shared the airwaves with the commercial and the government operators. If a commercial or government operator needed to ask an amateur operator to cease operation or to change frequency, the amateur operator had to be able to receive and send Morse code in order to communicate with the operator on the other service.

Today there are many ways to communicate by radio and none of the commercial or government operators use Morse code. Amateurs are the only ones still using it. Operators in none of the other services can communicate with an amateur by Morse code. Therefore, there is no longer any reason to require proficiency in Morse code so an amateur operator can communicate with an operator in a different radio service.

To draw an analogy, there once was a time when all automobiles had manual shift transmissions and an applicant for a drivers license was required to know how to drive a stick shift car. Today most cars have automatic transmissions and there is no license requirement to use a stick shift, even though many cars do still have a manual transmission. The same holds true with Morse code on the amateur radio bands. Morse code is only one of many ways to communicate by radio.

In fact, the amateur Morse code bands are rather quiet. Most amateurs use voice or a form of packet data instead of Morse code.

The existing HF band plans are very generous to Morse code operators. On most bands, Morse code is permitted in the entire band, even in

the portions that are open to voice transmissions, whereas voice transmission is prohibited in the Morse code portions. In short, the Morse code operator has almost the entire band available, but the voice operator only has the voice portion available. I favor leaving this policy in place so amateurs who wish to use Morse code are able to do so.

Some amateurs believe the Morse code license requirement keeps rude and unruly operators off the amateur high frequency bands and cite improper and illegal operations on the citizen radio band, which does not have a Morse code license requirement, as an example of what the HF amateur bands would be like if the Morse code license requirement was dropped.

However, for nearly ten years there has been no Morse code license requirement for using the amateur HF, UHF, and microwave bands and unruly operators are rarely encountered. This is true even on the very popular two meter amateur band. The rigorous technical test seems to deter unruly operations.

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